

Chief of Engineers Recommends Ecosystem Restoration and Navigation Improvements for Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway

WASHINGTON, DC - The Army's Chief of Engineers, Lieutenant General Carl A. Strock, has approved a Chief of Engineers Report that offers a framework for ecosystem restoration and navigation improvements on the Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway. His report has gone to the Secretary of the Army for review and submission to Congress.

"We have benefited from a collaborative approach with other federal and state agencies, non-governmental organizations and the public in developing our recommendations," Lieut. Gen. Strock said. "I am especially pleased that the study results enjoy the solid support of our non-federal sponsors, and I believe the independent review from the National Research Council has strengthened our effort. I am confident that our plan balances the need for economic growth and environmental sustainability."

The recommended plan includes a program of incremental implementation and comprehensive adaptive management to achieve the dual purposes of ecosystem restoration and navigation improvements. Its first costs are the \$5.7 billion framework for ecosystem restoration and a \$2.6 billion for the navigation efficiency improvements. The details include:

- An initial 15-year increment of ecosystem restoration actions with continuous analysis and review to shape the next increment at an estimated cost of \$1.58 billion.
- Immediate implementation of non-structural and small-scale structural navigation measures, together with monitoring and reporting of traffic and economic conditions at an estimated cost of \$235 million.
- Pre-construction engineering and design of seven new locks, together with further analysis, with initiation of construction subject to congressional review. The estimated cost of the seven new locks is \$1.79 billion. The plan, if approved, will be implemented in a phased manner with future checkpoints for the Administration and the Congress.

"We recognize the need to improve our evaluations of economic and ecosystem restoration matters," Lt. Gen. Strock added. "The NRC also recognized this and credited us for initiating a research program aimed at developing new economic models for evaluation of inland navigation projects. It is imperative to the future of the nation's economy and this important ecosystem that we proceed with implementation while we work on continuing data collection, improving modeling techniques and adapting the plan to emerging conditions."

The Corps believes that the recommended plan contains actions for managing the river for dual purposes. For example:

- Integrating channel maintenance activities with island building and backwater restoration can provide better synergy of management practices.
- Managing water levels to restore plant habitat and consolidate sediment can be achieved with little or no impacts to navigation.
- The placement of mooring facilities for waiting tows can also remove tow traffic from environmentally sensitive areas.
- Institutional arrangements involving both economic and environmental interests can ensure sustainable operation and maintenance of the waterway system.
- There is a potential for combining engineering, design and construction activities with new lock and fish passage at L&D 22.

Details about the Upper Miss study are at the [Restructured Navigation Study](#) website and information about the NRC findings can be found at the [National Academies](#) website.